

Five Wishes

Take 10 minutes to peruse our brief book summary of “Five Wishes.”

It begins with a conversation, one that will no doubt change your life, just as it did for the author Gay Hendricks.

The book has an intriguing subtitle -- “How Answering One Simple Question Can Make Your Dreams Come True.”

Just what is that compelling question?

Read on to find out!

I. The Conversation

Gay was a reluctant party-goer, but he wanted to please his date so he dragged himself to a party with her to play nice. There Gay met his match, a man named Ed who was an equally reluctant party-goer. The two agreed that since neither liked small talk, they wouldn't have any.

After reaching the small talk consensus, Ed asked, “Would you like to have some big talk or no talk at all?” Gay thought about it and then said, “I vote for the big talk.” At that point the two dove head first into a deep conversation, one Gay found both surprising and intriguing.

“Once upon a time,” Ed said, “I almost died.”

He explained that while it was a harrowing episode, it was the best thing that ever happened to him. He said through that experience, he was given the gift of a question, a question that helped him take a unique path in life.

When Ed revealed the question, he asked Gay to use his imagination, to see himself on deathbed now or 50 years from now. “I stand there and look you straight in the eyes and ask you, ‘Was your life a complete success?’”

Gay grew quiet and then said he'd give it some thought and get back to Ed. But Ed wouldn't let Gay wriggle out of the question. Ed said: “This moment is all the time you need. It's the only one we have.”

Gay knew Ed had a point so he came up with this deathbed wish:

“My life was not a total success because I never enjoyed a loving and happy marriage with a woman I adored and who adored me. I wish I’d enjoyed a life long blossoming of passion and creativity with a woman.”

Ed then coached Gay how to turn that deathbed wish into a goal. He said just put the wish in present tense, as though it’s happening right now.

Gay’s deathbed wish became this goal: “My life is a total success because I’m enjoying a long and happy marriage with a woman I adore and who adores me. I’m enjoying a life long blossoming of passion and creativity with her.”

The conversation continued and before long Gay had four more deathbed wishes transformed into goals. They are:

#2 “My life is a success because there’s nothing significant I left unsaid or undone.”

#3 My life is success because I write about what is sacred to me.”

#4 “My life is a success because I feel the presence of God all the time, everywhere I go.”

#5 “My life is a success because I savor every moment of it along the way.”

When Gay asked Ed more about his deathbed experience, he said he struck a deal with God. If he lived through the ordeal, he’d devote his life to achieving his goals and dreams.

When the conversation came to a close, Gay asked, “Any last minute advice for me? Ed gave him a wink and said “Get busy.”

II. The Journey

Gay committed to working on his goals, eventually making each one a reality. Today he’s happily married and he and his wife have two children. Gay said he doesn’t leave anything unsaid or undone, and he prides himself on living in the moment. He only writes about what is sacred to him, and he’s written many books, gaining popularity with appearances on Oprah.

Since the conversation with Ed years ago, Gay has had the “deathbed talk” with countless others, challenging them to transform their wishes into goals.

Gay said a wish becomes a goal simply by putting it in present tense, and the way to work toward the goal is with action steps. By way of example, if you're a writer, an action step is to set aside writing time every day.

III. Back Talk and Limiting Beliefs

Gay said prepare to hear some negative chatter when you begin to transform your life, but don't let that discourage you in any way. "Welcome the back talk because it's completely natural and normal," he said. "It's actually a sign that the new idea you've planted in your mind is taking root."

Gay encourages people to face limiting beliefs head on by realizing they are just what they're programmed to believe earlier in life. Once people are conscious of this, they'll be able to move through these inaccurate beliefs and realize they're limitless.

IV. Crossing The Finish Line

"I've found that we human beings have a great deal more capacity for achieving our goals than we usually give ourselves credit for," Gay said. "I believe we can attain all the important goals of our lifetime – if we get our hearts and minds in harmony about what those goals are."

When you commit to the goal, Gay said, change happens.